

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (original). A method for the ultrasound measuring of layer thicknesses in cladding tubes for nuclear fuel, which comprises:

providing a high-frequency probe with a coupling surface having a planar surface region;

wetting the tube with a coupling medium; and

coupling the planar surface region with a wetted surface of the tube by a contact technique.

Claim 2 (original). The method according to claim 1, wherein the coupling surface has an overall planar shape.

Claim 3 (canceled).

Claim 4 (original). The method according to claim 1, which further comprises recording echo signals received by the probe in digital form and improving a signal/noise ratio of the

recorded digital echo signals by digitally processing the recorded digital echo signals.

Claim 5 (canceled).

Claim 6 (original). The method according to claim 1, which further comprises carrying out the tube wetting step by wetting a tube having a wall thickness no greater than 1 mm.

Claim 7 (original). The method according to claim 1, which further comprises measuring a thickness of a liner layer of a nuclear fuel cladding tube selected from the group consisting of an inner liner layer and an outer liner layer, the thickness of the liner layer being approximately 0.15 mm.

Claim 8 (original). A method for the ultrasound measuring of layer thicknesses, which comprises:

providing a high-frequency probe with a coupling surface having a planar surface region;

wetting a nuclear fuel cladding tube with a coupling medium;

coupling the planar surface region with a wetted surface of the cladding tube by a contact technique; and

measuring a thickness of a liner layer of the cladding tube.

Claim 9 (original). The method according to claim 8, which further comprises carrying out the measuring step by measuring a thickness of a liner layer of the cladding tube selected from the group consisting of an inner liner layer and an outer liner layer.

Claim 10 (original). The method according to claim 9, wherein the thickness of the liner layer is approximately 0.15 mm.

Claim 11 (original). The method according to claim 8, wherein the coupling surface has an overall planar shape.

Claim 12 (canceled).

Claim 13 (original). The method according to claim 8, which further comprises recording echo signals received by the probe in digital form and improving a signal/noise ratio of the recorded digital echo signals by digitally processing the recorded digital echo signals.

Claim 14 (canceled).

Claim 15 (original). The method according to claim 8, which further comprises carrying out the tube wetting step by wetting a tube having a wall thickness no greater than 1 mm.

Claim 16 (original). A method for the ultrasound measuring of layer thicknesses in cladding tubes for nuclear fuel, which comprises:

coupling, by a contact technique, a planar surface region of a coupling surface of a high-frequency probe with a tube surface wetted with a coupling medium.

Claim 17 (original). The method according to claim 16, wherein the coupling surface has an overall planar shape.

Claim 18 (canceled).

Claim 19 (original). The method according to claim 16, which further comprises recording echo signals received by the probe in digital form and improving a signal/noise ratio of the recorded digital echo signals by digitally processing the recorded digital echo signals.

Claim 20 (canceled).

Applic. No. 10/673,961
Response Dated August 5, 2004
Responsive to Office Action of March 30, 2004

Claim 21 (original). The method according to claim 16, which further comprises carrying out the tube wetting step by wetting a tube having a wall thickness no greater than 1 mm.

Claim 22 (original). The method according to claim 16, which further comprises measuring a thickness of a liner layer of a nuclear fuel cladding tube selected from the group consisting of an inner liner layer and an outer liner layer, the thickness of the liner layer being approximately 0.15 mm.